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THE WHIM,

A

COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS.

By LADY WALLACE.

WITH AN

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC,

UPON THE ARBITRARY AND UNJUST

ASPERSION OF THE LICENSER

AGAINST

ITS POLITICAL SENTIMENTS.

OFFERED TO BE ACTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HOSPITAL AND POOR
OF THE ISLE OF THANET, BUT REFUSED THE ROYAL LICENCE

" Perish their arts that teach each crafty Vice
" Elegancies!!! Modes!!! Luxuriant poisons!
" Oh! let them pilfer all our richest Mines,
" But leave us opulent in Ignorance,
" Unpolish'd Virtues,---not to Crimes refin'd,
" And glory in our Spoil, but not our Ruin."

M.S. TRAGEDY BY LADY WALLACE.

MARGATE:

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1795.

THE WILM

COMEDY

BY JAMES W. WILM

IN TWO ACTS

CHARACTER BY JAMES W. WILM

AND BY JAMES W. WILM

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ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

I FEEL myself called upon to offer to your perusal, this harmless COMEDY—written with the view which has ever appeared to me the noblest and most gratifying, which the honest mind can indulge,—that of alleviating the sorrows of those afflicted by the pinching hand of Poverty—Sickness—or Oppression.

I felt too much elate, with the certainty that the emolument of this Comedy would relieve much distress in the Isle of Thanet, to allow myself for a moment to suppose it was possible, that the hand of power could be out-stretched to blast all my Fairy dreams, of thus feeding the hungry—and relieving the sick.

Not believing it possible, without the grossest injustice, to attribute a mean-

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ing to any one expression in the Comedy, as either personal, or prejudicial to the public tranquillity, I gave it to be rehearsed; and, as the public curiosity is ever awakened by *Female Whims*, the house on its being announced, was overflowing, and those who were sent away, were not more disappointed, than those who squeezed in, to be told that the Piece could not be acted without endangering the Theatre, with having the ROYAL LICENCE withdrawn; as the *Licencer* disapproved of the Piece as exceptionable. The accusation, that any production of mine could be obnoxious from its Political sentiments, appears to me, and I trust will so to you, to be extremely unjust. Whatever motives the *Licencer* may have, for giving a preference to particular people, he has no right to affix odium to the reputation of any individual, by such unjust and injurious remarks. From reading the Comedy it may easily be conceived, that other motives, independant of the sentiments and merits of it, influenced his decision,—I therefore thought proper to write to the Marquis of Salisbury, as the only hope I had

had left of securing the benefit of the Comedy to the Poor, I accordingly wrote him as follows:—

LETTER.

MY LORD,

“ WISHING to contrive a mode to relieve in this place, those who from the misfortunes of the times; require the help of the compassionate, I wrote a peice called *the Whim*, which I gave to be acted here, for the benefit of the Hospital and the Poor.—The Piece was rehearsed, and approved before the firmest friends of Government; and, I believe, my admiration of the Constitution of England, and my regard for the Minister, no one can doubt; as I have I trust, by the most unequivocal services, and steady sentiments in their favor, more than any one in my situation, proved my anxious wishes for their honor, and the tranquillity and prosperity of my Country.

A few days ago the Manager received a letter, saying, that the Piece had been
presented

presented to a Mr. Larpent, (who, I am told, your Lordship has appointed to inspect all productions for the Theatre) and that he found no objections to it, if signed by a Patentee, and that it would be Licensed on Monday; it consequently was notified to be performed last night, when a letter arrived, saying, that Mr. Larpent had objected to it from its exceptionable sentiments, and that he would lay it before your Lordship.

I cannot conceive that any unfavourable construction can with Justice be put on any sentiment which it contains, as whether ridiculing our late faithless Allies, — or the common follies of Life; it is surely, a far more soothing way to laugh at such unavoidable misfortunes, than to snarl at them.

Perhaps, Mr. Larpent may have more weighty reasons for objecting to the licensing the Piece, but, I am persuaded, that your Lordship must exult in every thing, which can turn the gaities of the age into immediate relief, for the miseries of the needy.

needy. Should any thing in the Piece be construed into an apparent infringement on good order, it will surprise me much, and I may say, with Lord Crockett,—

“ I wonder you don't see the moral it conveys ! ”

Besides the sorrow I shall feel of being baulked in my charitable scheme, I shall feel more keenly the sort of implication it conveys: such a character being affixed to the Piece, as that it is rejected on account of its Political sentiments. For, wherever power may be placed, I defy those who enjoy it, to possess a more honourable and heart-felt attachment to the British Constitution, than I do; or a more fervent wish for the internal tranquility and happiness of the community.

—There are Philosophers who think, that it is bad policy to alleviate the miseries of the lower order of mankind; but, I am of such different sentiments, that, let who will, for me, enjoy the exuberant luxuries of life, I shall be proud—could I turn my abilities so as to procure the comforts of existence for all my fellow

low

low creatures. I therefore hope, that your Lordship will approve this Piece, and the motive which I have for offering it to the public:

I have the honor to be, &c.

E. WALLACE.

Lord Salisbury condescended to answer this letter in the handsomest manner, regretting that Mr. Larpent had represented the Piece as unfit for appearing; that it would have given him pleasure could he have permitted it; for so good a motive as the relief of the Poor.—And as his Lordship is distinguished by his humanity, on all occasions, the misrepresentation of Mr. Larpent alone, could have made him refuse a Licence. To disprove such aspersions, I offer it to the perusal of the candid, who, I flatter myself, will pronounce that no sentiment which it contains, either degrades me, or is unworthy of the most exalted characters, either to feel, or express;—altho' some things have been added in getting it up; yet nothing

thing has been effaced, since sent to Mr, Larpent-. If to feel contempt for profligacy, injustice, or deceit, even if detected in a palace; or, if to respect virtue, and integrity, even in the humble obscurity of the cottage, be deemed exceptionable, I plead guilty; for I exult in such opinions—if the motive which I had for offering it to the Stage, the relief of the wretched, be obnoxious, I glory also in that wish—and I only regret, that I cannot, as I hoped, pour into their wounds the balm, which the author's three nights would have afforded.

For, as to the Comedy, or its authorefs, being branded with the suspicion of *exceptionable principles*; I am totaly indifferent to that.—Let him, who has more sound principles, him who has more independant ones him, who has done more to prove the rectitude of his opinions and actions, censure; but, until such appear in the lists to disapprove; I shall rest satisfied with self-approbation.

It is unfortunate, when men who are appointed thus with power to damn or save
with

with a despotic yes, or no,—are not endowed also with power to judge without prejudice; as on this occasion, it would have given some hundreds to feed the Hungry and relieve the Sick.--If one but hints at the possibility of a great man's not being endowed with truth, justice and moral rectitude, you are forthwith, called Democrat, Dæmon, or what you please!

A long list of ancestors,—large estates, and high sounding titles, are what are called Noble;—but reason, estimates the value of the man, not the splendor of his name; and looks up with disgust, to those, who under the influence of grandeur indulge atrocities and vices, which would render a plebeian an outcast from mankind.—God forbid, ever such Ideas should become common to Britons,—that Nobility should have a right to act immorally with impunity;—or that a degrading odium should be affixed on those, who without prejudice, or passion, from the innate dictates of rectitude, despise a bad man, however great.

We every day see, that virtue,—truth,—and integrity cannot be conveyed by the
patents

patents that bestow those splendid titles, which ever flow from the Throne; the never failing source of Nobility:—and, it is the pride and best prerogative of Britons that our Constitution, gloriously permits, even the humblest of mankind to be exalted,—if distinguished by virtue, or as faithful servants to their Country; which shews, that the tendency of this Comedy is not only irreproachable, but worthy of praise; from its proving, that virtue alone aggrandizes the Man: For,—

“ To be good is to be great. The Angels

“ Are greater far than men; because they’re better.”

This immortal truth raises humble virtue above mortality, or worldly distinctions:—and the freedom which such a knowledge gives to the human mind, strips grandeur and titles of all their dignity, and respectability, the moment in which they level themselves by vice,—arrogance,—or ignorance. Contempt is a foul fiend, that tramples on all distinctions,—for remorse degrades man even beneath the brute; and if callous to a sense of shame,—fear and scorn pursue his steps,

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who

who excites by falsehood, fraud or folly, the contempt of the virtuous; even should he be clad in purple, or sleep under the gilded canopy of State.—

Did the folly, and dissipation of the age, permit now of the growth of a Philosopher, I have no doubt, but that he would tell us, that the misfortunes and humiliations, that have overwhelmed the exalted in neighbouring countries, arose from this very misconception, that it is dangerous to unveil the errors of those of superior rank.—The nobles in France usurped a right, almost divine, like the wax images in their Churches, of being kept behind the curtain from Plebeian eyes; those were deemed guilty, of sacrilege if they used their reason or senses, in descrying their imperfections. But did this soothe the disaffection of the people, or engage the Nobles to act with more moderation and virtue? No, and this age is too enlightened for opinion to be restrained, or a barrier to be placed by Priest-craft on thought.— Oh! How much more flattering is it for Rulers to be acknowledged our superiors from

from integrity and worth, than from those fears which power awakens in the ignorant, abject mind?—But to deem it criminal for the inferior orders of mankind to judge of virtue and vice, revolts the human mind: This System once adopted in France, that it was the Prerogative of the Nobles to be free from censure,—ridicule, or comparison, filled the honest mind with contempt, or hatred; whilst the Great, with haughty arrogance exulted in indulgences, which would have been deemed crimes in their inferiors; until depravity became so general to them, that mankind spurned at the gaudy nuisance—and misery, alas, became contagious in Europe!

Happy! thrice happy, had the French Nation been! had the press, or drama, permitted those who were disinterested in the cause of honor and humanity, to raise their voice, to reprobate or ridicule their vices;—and by holding the mirror up to their deformity, have enabled them to foresee the horrors which surrounded them; they would have shuddered at
their

their danger. It was then too late to blind the eyes of the People, it only remained to open theirs; to reflect that they were men,—to be judged by men; and that although ennobled, they could be excelled by even the humblest of men, if more virtuous. This reflection might have rescued them in time from vices, immoralities, and cruelties, which have finally hurled them from their fancied greatness, and deprived them of even the *Rights of Men!*

The Stage is the only school which overgrown boys and girls can go to, and did the Licencer permit more satire, more sentiment, and less ribaldry, *outré* pantomime, and folly, to appear under his auspices, it would be doing the State more service, than thus taking the alarm at *The Whim* of renewing the Saturnalia Feast: and that too, from a pen, which although not paid by the Minister for either writing or inspecting pieces, yet which does him ever far more honor by disinterested admiration of his virtues, than any venal dependant could do. My Sentiments
are

are the dictates of unprejudiced conviction, and my approbation never bestowed but upon unquestionable merit. That many of our great people are by their immoral and injudicious conduct destructive to the respectability and tranquility of the community, it is by no means possible to conceal, it would be only cherishing, and nursing a mortal disease in embryo to conceal it;—how then is the evil to be remedied?—By remonstrance from the pulpit, and by ridicule from the stage, by public and private censure of those who forget what they owe to their high situations; for the great are certainly doubly pledged to their country, to act with more distinguished virtue, good faith, and benevolence, in return for those honors bestowed upon them.—Nor, does it add, to the disgust which their conduct causes to point out the diseased part were it true, that “*all robes and furred gowns*” hid nothing but depravities and corruption, our situation would be bad indeed, and it would be dangerous to call the attention of the people to so irritating a calamity—but, although the dissipated and profligate

fligate are too numerous, yet has not England to boast men of high birth, as well as men of inferior rank, even, at the very helm of Government, both civil and military, who possess virtues which add glory to birth, and splendor to any situation? happy would it be, if every object, either more exalted or more humble, were attracted by these men, who are distinguished by the brilliancy of their social and moral virtues: by emulating them, they'd rob satire of its sting; nor dread the contempt attending on ridicule:— But away from our liberal shores the vile unnatural idea, that grandeur, should not be censured,—and that reason should not see, and honor disapprove, their depravities, without the imputation of Jacobins, Democrats, or what not.

Such unmerited accusations render ludicrous what should be respected; and confound bad subjects with the most independant, and honorable characters, which Britain can boast:—those who have unquestionably served their Country, and who fervently wish for the respectability and safety of all its members.—

It

It would be well if the Licencer in his idle hours would inspect the News-papers, and issue his fiat against private slanders, with which the cut-throat prints, the corrupt vehicles of private envy—revenge—and falsehood, are ever filled;—they in the one line declaim against the assassinations of Paris, and in the next, without one passion to excite, stab the domestick tranquility, or fair fame of innocence; which is daily a prey, butchered by the rascality of some News-paper Devil, paid by those who are either instigated by private or political spite; better this, than to prevent the follies of the age from meeting ridicule on the stage: not to permit it, is acting unfairly by the great,—it is withholding from their view a picture of that contempt, which the humble honest mind liberally bestows, on the corrupted, however exalted by fortune or the chance of birth:—truths which the awful distance they keep, and the deference ever paid to rank, may prevent them otherwise from being made acquainted with—

I shall not intrude longer on your patience than by calling your attention to
the

the last speech in the Comedy. I leave you to judge, if it is not expressive of such respect for the British Constitution, as should prove acceptable to all mankind:—one thing I am sure of, that if all our Peers were to form so proper, and honourable a determination, they would have no reason to fear the pen of Satire, or the uplifted finger of Scorn.—

LORD CROTCHET.

“ I for my part never again shall give up, even for a day, the duties of my situation; but ever endeavour to act worthily as a member of one of the three parts of our glorious Constitution; who, I hope, will each for ages yet to come, discharge uncorruptibly, and distinctly, their several Duties: without encroaching on each others prerogative; so that the name of Briton, may prove to the latest ages, an example to Nations, and the admiration of Mankind.”

I shall not intrude longer on your patience than by calling your attention to the

DRAMATIC PERSONS

LORD CROTCHETT,

CAPT. BRIDGEMAN,

PAC,

MR. JUSTICE CHURCHILL,

JULIA,

NEIL,

AUNT MARTHA,

MASKS, &c.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD CROTCHETT,
CAPT. BELGRAVE,
FAG,
MR. JUSTICE CHUCLEPATE,

JULIA,
NELL,
AUNT MARTHA.

MASKS, &c.

THE
WHIM,
A COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

FAG and NELL.

FAG.

WELL, surely our old Lord is a whimsical old Genius.

NELL.

It is a queer *Whim*, I must confess, for him, who is for ever plodding over Greek books as big as himself, and dusting old petrifications—he who frets to death if a mouse stirs in the house, to have such a bustle all of a sudden.—Pray, *Fag*, is all right in the upper story?

[*pointing to her head.*]

FAG.

Can't say, 'pon honor, as I only arrange the outside; but I rejoice at the turn he has taken, for I was dev'lish tired of living in his humdrum fashion.

NELL.

He is forever preaching to my sweet young lady against modern men, and modern manners—says, that the ancients

D

lived

lived more decently—that the women in those days were employed from morning to night, in housewifery—never interfered in public life, or attempted to rule—and, what was horrible, most horrible, that they never had lovers after they were married! I was beginning to look out for another place, until he gave a fillip to my spirits by this fête to-day.

FAG.

I don't think you need have tired so neither, Mrs. Nelly, since you have had my company—but you don't love me, Nell?

NELL.

Lord, Fag, you know, to do that, I need not be shut up by this old Petrification, like one of his ugly tea-pots, which, he says, were dug out of the *ark*, at *Lanium*!

FAG.

Pray, what is his meaning of making the servants masters for a whole day?

NELL.

I heard him tell Miss Julia, that old folks—in the days of Adam, I suppose, when masters were no worse than their servants—that to make each contented with their situation, they had one day's holiday every year, which they called the Feast of *Satin*.

FAG.

Satin!—oh, he feasts best in modern times—he generally feasts with our masters every day—but he called it to me the Feast of *Satin-Ally*.

NELL.

NELL.

Aye, that is his name ; and a very sensible worthy fellow he must have been, for he allowed no distinction of persons, Knowing that the man is often better than the master, he made him master for one day ; and our old Lord is so madly fond of Old Fashions, that he means to be Mr. Satin for to-day.

FAG.

Lord ! dear Nell, we shall so enjoy ourselves—I shall have a ball and supper—the very best wines. I shall make so pretty a gentlemen !—Shan't I, my dear ?

NELL.

That you will—none of your degenerate wisby-washy fellows, like our debauchée Nobles, but a fine, bold, dashing fellow——

FAG.

And you, my dear sweet Nell, what a charming lady you will make !—but then, should you be as liberal of your favors as some of them are—odds heart !—I shall never be so much of the Man of Fashion as to bear that contentedly !

NELL.

I wish from my heart that this fashion may take, and be followed by all the Great, and that servants may have a day to lord it every year.

FAG.

Faith, then masters would have enough in that one day to teach them, to feel for the miseries which their caprices and pride cause to us, poor slaves to indigent fortune.

NELL.

THE WHIM,

NELL.

But I fancy our Nobles are not so good as the ancients were.

FAG.

I fear, indeed, many of them would feel the vengeance of their dependants, for their tyrannical caprices, before the day was over.

NELL.

Ha! ha! ha! I cannot help laughing at the sorry figure some of our lubberly great men would cut, if thus levelled!

FAG.

You may say that—for to be arrogant—false—in debt to tradesmen—to give money only to girls and gaming—to defame friends, without truth or humanity, a great man is above minding; but it won't do this for those who have their bread to earn.

NELL.

But, Fag, I fear you'll never be able to do this part well—why, you can't even tell a lie with a bold face——

FAG.

Nor can I, for the soul of me, insult humble worth, send the needy away from my door, or act with treachery by my friend.

NELL.

Poor Fag! you'll cut but a humdrum figure then, as a great man.

FAG

FAG.

I hope the thing will take: it is a *new Whim*, and like all out-of-the way things, may become the rage with great folks; and who knows, if it does, but that I may one day be a King!

NELL.

And I Queen Elinor! Lord, how I should change the face of affairs! You know, we females make the best of Kings.

FAG.

What mighty changes would you make, my beauteous Queen?

NELL.

First of all, I'd see the Despots at the Devil, before they should ever swindle my people out of a guinea, or a barley-corn.

FAG.

Then you'd have no Allies, Nell, for they are ever avaricious or faithless. I trust, then, you'd make peace?

NELL.

Oh that I would; I should have a fine glorious crop next year, for I'd convert all their swords into ploughshares.

FAG.

Then the French would come and gather it; and I suppose, you'd surely untax us?

NELL,

THE WHIM,

NELL.

No!—taxes are necessary evils. But I'd tax all luxuries, gaming, men-milliners, men-servants, dogs, and dollies, so completely, that every one should be able to pay for bread, even if twice as dear. I'd even do like Queen Anne—I'd give all the money I could muster to relieve my people,

FAG.

Bravo, Nell!—But here comes Miss Julia—so I'm off. [Exit Fag.]

Enter JULIA,

NELL.

I hope, my dear Lady, that you are not so unhappy now. This melancholy dungeon is at last become a little gay. Pray don't let slip, without profiting of it, the only opportunity your father ever gave us of being joyous.

JULIA.

I hope I shall not prevent you from being as happy as you can Nell.

NELL.

But, dear Madam, I cannot be so if you don't partake. Your father chuses me to be mistress for to-day—and I must command your attendance and gaiety for one day.

JULIA.

I am in so embarrassed a situation that I really cannot.

NELL.

NELL.

Oh, we shall have rare sport!—I shall give a ball—and a masquerade—that you may see Capt. Belgrave.

JULIA.

Don't you think that his being here in the disguise of a servant will be discovered, and hurt my reputation? If so, I shall never be able to pardon his imprudence.

NELL.

La! Madam, don't be angry with the charming noble young gentleman—What could he do? He saw you often at your Aunt's, who don't relish his attentions to you; and he being in love with you, and your Father seeing no company—he young, brave, and a soldier, became enterprising.

JULIA.

But how did he contrive to be hired?

NELL.

He took the name of Cæsar, and Lord Crotchett luckily fancied he saw in him all the hardy vigour of an ancient Roman, and for that reason hired him. He told me of his passion for you—you think him a bold fellow, and, I warrant, like him none the worse; and Captain Belgrave is charmed with his place, and only watches some happy moment, now that he is sure of your heart, to ask you of your father. Now, I vow, I think this is all very pleasant.

JULIA.

Say what you will, I cannot suffer him to remain here in concealment—I cannot stoop to deceit.

E

NELL,

THE WHIM,

NELL.

Oh, very well, Ma'am—I know a way to get rid of him in a minute—let me run, tell my Lord, that Cæsar is a modern fine gentleman, and off he will be packed directly: and then, dear, dear me, what a happy woman you will be! married to the ancient old Trojan my Lord intends for you—a lover only of antiquities and curiosities! oh, he will make much of you, I shall come and see your Ladyship when put in a glass case—ha! ha! ha! But meantime I'll just run tell my Lord to pack off Cæsar.

JULIA.

Stop, you giddy creature—you take pleasure in tormenting me!

NELL.

Why won't you be reasonable, then? I have but now contrived that you should see your Lover in a garb more becoming him than his livery.

JULIA.

How is that possible, and my father here?

NELL.

Why, he himself proposed it—ha! ha! ha! If the old gentleman will indulge in whims, surely there is no harm in turning them to our advantage.—But here he comes—do you go away, and leave me to manage.

[Exit Julia.]

Enter Lord CROTCHETT.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Oh, here you are, Nell. I have been looking for you, to give you a dress for to-day. I intended, if I could have
got

got it, to have given you a Grecian dress—for you have something Grecian about the nose.

NELL.

Have I really, my Lord, a Grecian nose?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Yes, indeed—it has struck me very often; therefore, it is proper that to day you do the honors of the house.—Fag will give you the dress.

NELL.

Oh, my Lord! oh, dear me, how charming!—

Lord CROTCHETT.

And in place of Julia being your mistress, she shall be your maid, quite at your command, whilst I myself shall entirely submit to the orders of Fag.

NELL.

May I presume to ask the meaning of this revolution?

Lord CROTCHETT.

What, Nell, do you not discover the moral of it?—Have I not told you that it was an ancient practice with the Romans, in memory of the Golden Age. There was no distinction of personages—no distinction of ranks.—the haughty Patricians, and the proud Partizans, were obliged to bend, for the masters on that day, became the servants of even their slaves, and heard them, with impunity, ridicule their follies, or execrate their corruptions.

NELL.

These feasts now, my Lord, would put many in England in their proper places, I promise you.

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Lord

THE WHIM,

Lord CROTCHETT.

But alas, all reason and philosophy are banished from the world—we have changed the uses and purposes of nature, and I do not know what the world will turn to at last.

NELL.

They say it is always turning round, so it surely will come right at last.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Thank heaven, however, I have escaped the general corruption.

NELL.

Dear, my Lord, I'm sure you are quite incorruptible. I protest, to look at you, one would think you had been born two centuries ago.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Oh, Lacedemonia! Athens! Rome! where are ye now? I cannot think, without tenderness, on the destruction of these venerable cities! All nations should have a day of general mourning for the Seven Wise Men, and religiously observe all their customs.

NELL.

Pray, good my Lord, tell me some of their fashions?

Lord CROTCHETT.

For instance—when a young gentleman shewed an inclination to drunkenness, do you know, to cure him, they made his servants appear drunk before him.

NELL.

NELL.

Well, manners are sure advanced now-a-days, for servants get drunk often enough without being bid ; but it don't cure their masters.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Then, to teach the people to guard against swindlers and pickpockets, and to know all the arts of thieving, they gave a reward to those who stole with the greatest dexterity.

NELL.

Dear me ! dear me ! If they'd give those rewards now-a-days, what a fight of competitors there would be, of all ranks and denominations.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Then it was a fine lesson of morality, the Lacedemonian balls !

NELL.

Pray Heaven, my Lord, you may bring all this into fashion again.

Lord CROTCHETT.

It would be rendering a greater service to my country than any which has been done for many years.

NELL.

I have no doubt of it, indeed : some of the old ways are surely the best.

Lord

THE WHIM,

Lord CROTCHETT.

What are their modern balls, masquerades, and assemblies, but nurseries of gamesters, loose women, and wretched husbands! I wish to recall those precious times, that my daughter may profit by them.

NELL.

It is, I suppose, from pure respect to the ancients that you have promised Miss Julia to a man in his grand climacteric?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Yes; and in virtue of that right, which, from times the most distant, a father has ever had of disposing of his child.

NELL.

Girls now-a-days are so changed, that they sometimes dispose of themselves for love too, unmindful of the charms of antiquity——But, my Lord, did the pretty girls amongst the Romans never——

Lord CROTCHETT.

Amongst the Romans, women did not intermeddle with what did not concern them.——Did you give Fag the rich suit I ordered for him?

NELL

Yes, my Lord, and he will be dressed in a trice. He is not so much of the fine gentleman as to be two or three hours at his toilet, although he looks as well as most of them, after all their daubing.

But,

Lord CROTCHETT.

But, Nell, how shall I get a dress for Cæsar? I forgot him till this moment.

NELL.

Oh, but I thought of him; and as you had not prepared a dress for him, I thought the uniform of the dragoons which your son left, would do for him.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Very well, indeed; he will look charming in them. Do you know that I am very much pleased with this young fellow—he is not like the degenerate puny lads of our days—he is quite like a Roman.

NELL.

Oh, my Lord, what a pity it is that the men are so degenerate now-a-days!—Oh, that I had lived in the days of Hercules or Alexander the Great!

Lord CROTCHETT.

I have some thoughts of making Cæsar my Secretary: he understands Greek, and when I told him of my Saturnalia Feast, he approved of it highly. He is truly a promising youth.

NELL.

He really looks like Hercules, in his uniform, with his hat over his eye, and his head set back on his fine shoulders. Aye, my Lord, it is a handsome husband of that sort Miss Julia should have, not an old withered Egyptian mummy,

Lord

THE WHIM,

Lord CROTCHETT.

Keep your reflections to yourself, you baggage, and don't put such notions into my girl's head.

Enter FAG.

FAG.

Is it really true, my Lord, what Nell tells me, that I am to be master in my turn?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Yes, Fag—you shall command me and the whole family.

FAG.

It is really a good thought, and a very just one—for I am not cut out for a servant.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Not very well, indeed, Fag ; but do you really think that you have all the qualities necessary for a great man?

FAG.

Why, yes, Sir—I think I shall make a very pretty sort of a gentleman: first place, I like to lounge, and sit in an easy toothpick way, and do nothing, and to be waited upon.—Then I have a most fashionable propensity to pleasure.—I like to dash, let who will pay my debts. I hate to have *no* said to me, and I like monstrously to order a good dinner, provided I am to sit down to it and pay nothing for it.—Oh, there shall be excellent cheer in my house—I shall have a feast every day.

Lord

Lord CROTCHETT.

Oh, you are fit to be a modern fine gentleman—a puny character. I am old fashioned, like a Roman, and think of providing for my children.

FAG.

Oh, as to them—if daughters, I'd dispose of them to the first rich dog I could catch, and then I should have their follies no longer to answer for.

Lord CROTCHETT.

But your son?——

FAG.

Why, I'd give him a commission, and make him live upon his pay, to teach him economy. I should spend all my fortune myself.

Lord CROTCHETT.

So, so—I thought how it would be:—but I hope you'll go no more to the pot-house to tipple?

FAG.

Oh, fye, fye, my Lord! No, to be sure—I shall get drunk whenever I please at home, or in the clubs, like other men of fashion.

NELL.

You see, Sir, what a dasher he will be.

FAG.

But, Sir, now that I am master, pray what are you to be? for I will have no lazy, idle fellows in my house—

F

you

you must work faithfully for your bread—it is dev'lish dear now.

Lord CROTCHETT.

This is but just.—Well, what do you think me fit for?

NELL.

Let us think—What will he be able to do

FAG.

Not much, I'm afraid. It is easier to be a gentleman, than a good servant. As for my Valet he will never do, for he cannot even dress himself—he is awkward, slow, and unhandy.

NELL.

Well, then, make him Butler.

FAG.

No, not that neither—he'd soon begin to forget but that he is still master: no, no, I'll have no Butler, I'm resolved,—I'll keep the keys of my cellar myself, that's the way to have good old wine.

Lord CROTCHETT. [*Aside.*

Here is a good lesson when I am master again!

NELL.

Why, then, make him Cook.

[*Exit Nell.*

FAG.

Ah! you've hit it—I must have a dev'lish good Cook; he is the most necessary personage in a family. When any

any one is to be introduced, he won't ask—is Lord Fag an amiable, sensible, good sort of man, a man of honor or of family; but they will ask—does he keep a dev'lish good Cook? And as I wish to have friends and to be respected, I must think of nothing so much as my Cook. Why, I shall be caressed and courted according to his merits, not my own, like other great men: therefore, I can only make you my Under-cook.

Lord CROTCHETT. [*Bowing.*]

I shall do my best to please you, Sir.

FAG.

But beware of thinking of the perquisites of office;—no broken victuals. I shan't be so foolish as to be charged ten-pence for as much parsley as you get for a penny; nor will I eat capons when I pay for young Turkeys, Sirrah!

Lord CROTCHETT.

I make no doubt, such things have been done before now, Sir. I shall take care in future.

FAG.

And don't eat the tid bits off my ragouts before you put them on the table; nor drink the wine allowed for fauces; nor don't oil the butter when chattering with the maids.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I trust I shall profit by your instructions.

FAG.

Above all, remember punctuality—there is no comfort in life without it. I will have a reform of manners in my

visitors—no one shall come to my house to dine half an hour after my hour—nor will I have my Cook presume to make me wait a minute. Punctuality is the greatest comfort in life, and the want of it in others embitters existence. Oh! the horrors of waiting, when hungry, an hour for a good dinner!—the first half hour, impatience sickens—then away goes appetite and good humour.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Very true, Sir. But none but fools, and conceited modern coxcombs, can want the virtue of punctuality.

FAG.

Well then, go put on your cap and apron, and then, by way of whet, make me a hock cup, and an anchovy-toast, as a trifling specimen of your abilities.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

NELL and FAG, dressed in high Fashion.

FAG.

WELL Nell, have not I quite the graces of a man of fashion? And now that I'm rich, ye Gods, what a spirit I shall have! As for my extraction, no one will mind that—some Peers, faith, have no better blood in their veins!

NELL.

NELL.

And if we judge by some of the Nobles, blood is not the better for being ancient!

FAG.

I certainly have a noble air, for I but just stept across the street, and they called me "Your Honor!" But what delights me is, that I have it in my power to throw my wit, splendor, and graces, at the feet of my fair Elinor.

NELL.

What! will you still love me?

FAG.

Why, faith, Nell, you have a great fault, as times go; you know, old women are quite the fashion—you are too young.—But, egad I shall please myself; I shall ever prefer the symmetry of Venus, and the rosy health of young Hebe, to all the fat Forties of Fashion.

NELL.

Well, you are right—you'd change for the worse, from me to an unfeeling, avaricious, old, artful—and I shall not prove ungrateful.

FAG.

Well, then, were I King of Bantam, Emperor of the Moon, I'd ne'er desert thee.—But, Nell, do you think we shall be quite the thing?

NELL.

La! surely there is nothing so easy as to learn the *ton*; the greatest Fool can do that,

FAG.

THE WHIM,

FAG.

Now that we are alone, let us practise a little: you are to be a young married lady, and I a young beau of fashion,

FAG.

[Goes to the door, and announces himself Lord Fag to wait on your Ladyship.]

How do you do, most bewitching?

NELL.

Oh, my dear Lord!

[Nell runs, and kisses him violently.]

FAG.

Don't, Nell, the ladies, sure, are not so free at first.

NELL.

Well, then—speak on?

FAG.

No; do you begin—faith, I don't know how.

NELL.

Come, then—Well, my Lord, I vow you are as scarce as a good character—I have not seen you this age.

FAG.

Oh, I am quite unfortunate; but I was so embarrassed all day yesterday, running into the City after our Grocer.—Lord, what a sad slip of the tongue, *Grocer!* I meant to say, after my Jew Broker.

NELL.

A COMEDY.

41

NELL.

Oh, you *ton* men are perpetually thus engaged. Why did you not come to the Duchess of Dash's assembly in the evening?

FAG.

Lord, I detest that woman: she is always trying to have me, but I cut her quite—I went to the club, where I lost at least twenty-pence.

NELL.

Lord, how vulgar!—Twenty-pence! Why, it would disgrace even a footman to play for pence!

FAG.

I should say I lost twenty thousand.

NELL.

I vow, I was quite jealous; I thought you had been with Lady Simper.

FAG.

Oh no, my charmer, *that affair* is quite over: so soon as it ceased to be talked of, I gave her up: I don't see her now.

NELL.

Vastly well, Fag! only a little more contempt when speaking of those women who have resisted you. To defame women of honor is the glory of a *ton* man!

FAG.

She worked me a pair of garters for my velvet breeches:

NELL.

THE WHIM,

NELL.

What ! this don't do for a Lady.

FAG.

Confound my blundering tongue: no, sure enough it won't do that. I should say, she worked me a purse, will you accept of it—I wish only for other women's favors, to throw them at the shrine of my Goddess !

NELL.

I protest, my Lord, your're quite a butterfly—you sip at every flower.

FAG.

But I only adore you, my charming creature ! and now that the troublesome thing, thy husband, is absent, let me prove to you the reality of my love—repulse me Nell,—sure ladies repulse a little !

[*Nell runs to kiss him.*]

NELL.

Do you think so ?

FAG.

But hark !—I hear a noise, perhaps it is your Lord !—and he is such a brute, I shall be tempted to throw him over the window, if I stay ; so adieu, *ma chere amie*.

NELL.

Vastly well, Fag—we shall be quite the thing—ha ! ha ! ha !

Enter

Enter Capt. BELGRAVE.

BELGRAVE.

Lord, child, where have you been? I have been looking for you this age.

NELL.

Lovers, Sir, always reckon moments ages.

BELGRAVE.

Who would not be impatient in my situation? Did you not assure me I should to day see my Julia, without restraint, and yet half of it is gone already?

NELL.

You are a grateful youth, truly! Have I not raised you from being footman, to be a Captain of Dragoons, and yet you are not pleased?

BELGRAVE. [*Smiling.*

I am sensible of all I owe you; but recollect, I have already been a week here, and I have only seen my Julia four or five times. I am absent from my regiment without leave, so time is precious. Should my uncle know I am here, I should be ruined.

NELL.

I will not conceal it from you—my Lord is more determined than ever, to marry her, to this old petrified Grecian

BELGRAVE.

But if Julia loves as I do——

G

NELL.

THE WHIM,

NELL.

You men always pretend to doubt a woman's love, yet you ever act as if you were quite sure of it.

BELGRAVE.

Do you really think she——

Enter JULIA, dressed as a Servant.

NELL.

Oh, here she comes, opportunely, to answer for herself. Here, Ma'am, I introduce to you a young Officer, who dies to throw himself at your feet; and if you respect your mistress's orders, you will treat him kindly.

JULIA.

What! Captain Belgrave in this dress?

BELGRAVE.

How blest I am to see you!

JULIA.

How came you in my brother's uniform?

NELL.

Love, you know, is the God of Metamorphose. But this change you owe to your father, and the brilliant genius of me, your once humble servant.

BELGRAVE.

This day must decide my happiness or misery for ever!—
Oh then!——

NELL.

NELL.

Come, tell him, over and over again, that you love him; for that is the question he was going to ask, and he seems as if no words would convince him.

JULIA.

Have I not said enough? Have I not assured you, that nothing I so much dread as the husband whom my father has destined for me?

NELL.

Except the thoughts of losing you, Sir, she wishes to add——

JULIA.

Don't ask more—I already am too much to blame, in permitting you to remain with me, unknown to my father.

NELL.

Hoity, toity—what a sentimental waiting-maid I have got! Who will say that love sets reason a-packing?—But, Sir, we must lose no time—we have nothing for it; but to——Hush! I hear some one coming—heavens! it is your mischievous aunt, Miss Martha.

Enter MARTHA.

MARTHA.

Why, I should not have known this house. Here is a fine to do—such a noise! Is my brother dead, or grown deaf, that he allows it?—So you are here, niece!

BELGRAVE. [*Aside.*]

Heavens! this old damsel has eyed me too often, not to know me, turn as I will.

G 2

MAR-

THE WHIM,

MARTHA.

[Looking at Belgrave, who turns from her]

What a handsome fellow here is!—Pray, Sir, don't let me disturb you—But do my eyes deceive me!—Captain Belgrave, and here! *[Looking in a rage at Julia.]*

BELGRAVE. *[Confused.]*

Madam—indeed, I say, Ma'am—'pon my word—pray, Madam—I do assure you, the occasion—I would say the circumstances that now procure me the——The pleasure of seeing you, is one of those circumstances.

MARTHA.

The most embarrassing in the world—Is it not so, Sir?

BELGRAVE.

Indeed, Madam, I can explain—but—but——

MARTHA.

But what? Speak, pray, there is nobody here but my friends—proceed, then—tell me how comes it, that after having taken leave of your uncle, Justice Chuclepate, and me, to go to your regiment, I find you here, and dressed in another regimental than that of your regiment?

NELL.

Oh, Ma'am, the regiment has only changed its facings—that's all!

BELGRAVE.

I hardly know what face to put on this. *[aside]*

MARTHA.

So you make no reply, Sir?—My niece too seems quite confounded.

BEL-

A COMEDY.

47

BELGRAVE.

The time or place will not permit me to enter upon the story; but rest assured, Ma'am, that business the most interesting has detained me.

MARTHA. [*In a rage.*]

Oh, I can see the nature of your business—all men are monsters!!! I had made an exception to this idea in your favour—I hoped you were to be won by my kindnesses—my services; but you are faithless as the rest!—and as for you, Miss Pert, hardly out of your shell, to conduct so knowingly an intrigue! Your air of simplicity shall not dupe me any longer. I shall hasten your marriage with him, who has age, and steadiness, to manage you.

JULIA. [*Looking disdainfully.*]

I have no reason to conceal my conduct or sentiments; but I perceive that there are many why I should not interrupt your explanation with Captain Belgrave. [*Exit Julia.*]

NELL. [*Aside.*]

If he can have any thing to say to this old Squaw, he is in the high fashion indeed!

MARTHA.

You hear how that saucy minx dares to talk to her aunt!—but I will fly and find my brother, and tell him what fine doings are going on in his house, once as quiet as a Quaker's meeting.

[*Going out, meets Lord Crotchett, dressed like the Cook, in cap and apron, and kitchen knife by his side.*]

Enter

THE WHIM,

Enter Lord CROTCHETT.

Lord CROTCHETT.

What is all this scolding?—Oh, my sister is here!

NELL.

Now all is over!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Sister you like pleasure—you are come just in the nick of time, to be at our merry-making.

MARTHA.

Are you run mad, brother?—Bit by a tarantula?—thus to occupy yourself in fooleries, at your age, whilst a fellow in disguise is seducing, your daughter.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Ha! ha! ha! and who may this be? You perhaps mean this handsome young Officer?

MARTHA.

Yes, to be sure I do.—Are you stupid enough not to see it?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Oh, the story is charming!—I shall die laughing!—So you are jealous of this fine Captain?

MARTHA.

I jealous! Why the man's brain is quite turned!

Lord CROTCHETT.

No, my dear angry sister: it is by my orders all this has happened, and for the wisest motives.

MAR-

A COMEDY,

49

MARTHA.

Is it possible? By your orders?

NELL.

Oh yes, indeed, Ma'am, all by my Lord's orders—so
pray say no more about it.

BELGRAVE.

Yes, Madam, it was he alone who engaged me to stay,
Was it not, my Lord?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Yes, upon my honor, sister.—Ha! ha! ha! her sur-
prise is charming.

MARTHA.

Gracious stars! is it possible that you can suffer all this?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Yes, I tell you I have resolved on it a week or more; it
is no hasty thought, I assure you.

MARTHA.

Pray, has the treacherous Captain been a week here?

Lord CROTCHETT.

O yes, more than a week.

MARTHA.

Was there ever such conduct, brother, thus to advise
a young man, to neglect his service!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Oh, he will serve the better for it all the rest of his life.

MAR-

THE WHIM,

MARTHA.

You have then given up all thoughts of the marriage which I advised, and you promised, for your daughter?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Oh, that will keep cold—ha! ha! ha!

MARTHA.

Keep cold! oh, he is surely mad! I will never again set a foot in your house.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I wonder, a person of your sense don't see the moral it conveys!

MARTHA.

I have not patience——so you pretend, your moral philosophy makes you play the fool!

NELL.

And I am sure, Ma'am, all natural philosophers must approve my Lord's conduct.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I had no idea that the Captain's disguise would have amused you so much. Pray, now, do as I do, sister—laugh and be merry, now that the surprize is over—ha! ha! ha!

MARTHA.

You provoke me beyond all bearance!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Don't be angry, sister? If this strapping, flashy, young dog hits your fancy, why you shall have him.

MAR-

A COMEDY.

51

MARTHA.

Oh, I shall burst with rage!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Why, I thought you wanted him to serve you! Don't be so angry—I meant no harm.

MARTHA.

I will no longer listen to your impertinence. I am fooled! but I will be revenged—I'll fly to his uncle, and tell him all.

[Exit Martha.]

Lord CROTCHETT.

His uncle! why, what the devil, is she mad? Sister, sister, what do you mean? Stay one moment?

[Exit Lord Crotchett after her.]

NELL.

Now, most noble Captain, your sentence will be pronounced.

BELGRAVE.

I am dumb with astonishment!

NELL.

You told Miss Julia, perhaps, that you knew Miss Martha, and that she has claims upon your sweet person?

BELGRAVE.

Claims upon me! what an idea! This old vixen is a great friend of my uncles, and took great interest in me, and seemed very fond of me. I was civil, that she might not injure me with him or my Julia's father.

H

NELL,

THE WHIM,

NELL.

Oh, your old damsels have a patent for being envious and spiteful—she certainly will discover all. Then my Lord will be furious, I shall be un-ladied, and all our sport spoiled!

BELGRAVE.

I think it will be prudent for me to be off. But I must first see Julia—I have got a domino for her.

NELL.

A domine! what, to marry her directly!

BELGRAVE.

I mean a dress for the masquerade. I shall know it again, and settle all our plans there.

[Lord Crotchett calls Cæsar behind the scenes.]

NELL.

Fly, Captain Belgrave!—Lord Crotchett calls you.—Try to brave the storm. *[Exit Belgrave.]* What will become of us now? Oh woman, woman, this always comes of thine intrigues! Yet, when the heart is set upon a love scheme, we will deceive father, mother, husband—Every body, or any body, we make confidants of, rogues or servants, and hope for secrecy; but when arrived at the moment so desired, then perhaps all is discovered—and reflection opens the eyes, when too late, to reputation lost, and unavailing remorse! Oh, dear me, dear me! did folks but think of this in time, what honest women we should all be!

Enter JULIA.

NELL.

Still upon thorns!—Belgrave is no where to be found.

JULIA.

JULIA.

I hope he is not discovered !

NELL.

Lord Crotchett is come in, seeming very cross.

JULIA.

Heavens ! what will become of my character ?

NELL.

Why, faith, it is in some danger, now that it has got into the hands of a spiteful, disappointed old cat.

JULIA.

Oh, she will stick at nothing to defame me ! she will send scandals of me to all those wretches, who, not satisfied with preying on the public, live by assassinating the reputation of innocent females.

NELL.

Hang them—no one minds them : but it would go to my heart to lose such a lover !

JULIA.

Here comes my father—I fear to meet him—so I will retire.

Exit Julia.

NELL.

And I tremble to ask, though I long to know, how matters go.

Enter Lord CROTCHETT.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Well, Mrs. Nell, what do you think of the rage my sister was in—what can she mean ?

H 2

NELL.

THE WHIM,

NELL.

Why, I suppose it is all caused by some mistake, that in a little time will be explained. Perhaps she hates old fashions, as she wishes to pass herself off, for a new one, and she is offended, at your doing so much honor to the ancients.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I ran after her, and wanted to make her explain what the devil she would be at; but she abused me like a pick-pocket, and bounced off, without hearing me.

NELL. [*Aside.*]

Bravo! then all is safe.

Lord CROTCHETT.

But, nevertheless, Nell, as she has awakened in my mind some doubts about Cæsar, I thought it was prudent to turn him away—so I have forbid him my house until I have an explanation with my sister.

NELL. [*Weeping.*]

Oh dear! oh dear! my Lord, have you been so cruel, only because Miss Martha loved him so much! She wanted him for herself.

Lord CROTCHETT.

What, Nell, are you so sorry for what I have done? I fancy, you too are in love with him?

NELL.

Indeed, indeed, it was very cruel to turn so good, so handsome a young man on the wide world, for no one fault but being like Hercules, and not to let him bid me adieu!

Lord

Lord CROTCHETT.

Very true, Nell, that would be distressing to you, if he was your lover; but then, if it should chance to be as represented by Martha, that he is my daughter's lover, in disguise—and he certainly knows too much Greek for a footman—and if it should turn out—which I am loath to believe—that this little Grecian nose is in the plot, to deceive me, don't you think I should be right to send Mrs. Nelly a-packing too, and to lock up my daughter?

NELL.

Aye, my Lord; but not until you are master again—Oh, Sir, it was very wicked in Miss Martha to make so good a gentleman so unjust!

Lord CROTCHETT.

I thought of that—that I shall not be master until tomorrow; and so I sent away Cæsar, and did at once as Alexander the Great did, when he cut the Gordian knot.

NELL.

Indeed, Sir, you have acted very prudently—But I must run to Miss Julia. [*Aside.*] *Exit Nell.*

Enter FAG, in a passion.

FAG.

Pray, what does all this mean? Who dares to contradict me in this house?

Lord CROTCHETT. [*Bowing.*

What is the matter, Sir?

FAG.

THE WHIM,

FAG.

Don't you know that I am your master?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Who presumes to dispute it?

FAG.

Have I not the sole power to regulate this family?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Certainly—Have I not myself vested you with it?

FAG.

How came I then to be treated with indignity?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Has any one offended you?

FAG.

Yes, grossly, and I am in a rage unexpressible!

Lord CROTCHETT.

For why?

FAG.

I have a mind to turn the house out of the window.

Lord CROTCHETT.

What a passion you are in, Sir! you are not yourself.

FAG.

I am distracted by fury!

Lord

Lord CROTCHETT.

It is very wrong, Sir, to give passion sway. We should learn to govern ourselves before we command others.

FAG.

Let me never hear such plebeian sentiments; they favour of the cook, fellow. What, am I to be master, a man of fashion, and not put myself in a passion, when I please, and without either having, or hearing reason!—There never was such impertinence! Confine, then, Mr. Prate-apace, thy vulgar sentiments to thy kitchen.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Pray, what offends you, Sir?

FAG.

I complain of an insolent varlet, who presumes to give laws in my house—a fellow who I shall kick out of doors presently.

Lord CROTCHETT.

And who may this insolent be?

FAG.

It is you, fellow!—How dared you to take it upon you to turn away Cæsar? Did I not tell you, I'd have no butler to tyrannize over the rest of my servants? Cæsar, whom I intended for my valet—he was a treasure in my house—a generous fellow, who would have given me the first of every thing, I paid for, and a share of even my best wines.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I had very serious reasons.

FAG.

FAG.

You presume to talk of reason, —my will directs here—and my protection is enough! Poor fellow, I am quite sorry for him! He must have a bad heart who could use him so, when I was giving a ball, to make my people happy!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Will you have done scolding, Sir?

FAG. [*Shaking his fist at him.*]

If I was more accustomed to lord it, I should let you feel the fire I am warmed by—But go, recall him directly—remember that, for I shall be your master—his master—and master in every thing—else not master at all. Then where is your respect for the ancients?

Lord CROTCHETT.

Pray, Sir, be calm!—It is very just—I have been wrong.

FAG. [*Haughtily.*]

I shall have nothing done here but with my orders—I shall govern with rigour, and insist on implicit obedience.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I shall respect the power which you are vested with.

FAG.

If that don't please you, why you may break your word, and so become a great man again, and I shall return to my kitchen.

Lord CROTCHETT.

No, no, I have no power but what I have this day resigned to you, by the most praise-worthy custom of the ancients.

FAG.

FAG.

And it is in the properest hands imaginable, I can assure you.

Lord CROTCHETT.

I hope, then, you are no longer displeased——But there seems a noise, as if some of the company were come.—I must go and arrange my kitchen for supper.

FAG.

And, harkee, fellow, tell the company that I shall wait on them presently. [Exit Lord Crotchett.]

FAG, *Solus.*

Well, though Nell has bewitched me, yet she is not able to divine that I have this for her: [*Takes a parcel.*]—Else she would fly to hear what Cæsar said. “My dear Fag,” said he, “make haste, and give this to Nell—she already knows the use it is for.” It surely is some present he is making her—I wonder what it is!—Cæsar is too handsome, to be so courteous—I must have a peep at it.—Nell must have no secrets from me—She will think me a very jealous fellow, if I open it—But now that my curiosity is agog, faith I must have a sight on’t—Shall I?—Oh yes, I must—[*Opens the parcel*]—’pon my life, this Cæsar is a jolly dog—he gives dev’lish long measure! why, this is the longest cloak I ever saw!

[He displays the domino over a chair, and exit.]

Enter Justice CHUCLEPATE and Aunt MARTHA.

MARTHA.

Come in, Mr. Justice Chuclepate—come in?

I

JUS-

THE WHIM,

JUSTICE.

You force me, dear Martha, to take a step beneath the dignity of my character—above all, in my robes?

MARTHA.

But without your robes you'd not get entrance here, for all must appear at a masquerade, in *false* characters.

JUSTICE.

But I am afraid you are leading me a wild-goose chase, after all; and that I shall not find my nephew guilty, since both his character and commission, depend on his not being absent, without leave, from his regiment.

MARTHA. [*Angry.*

Pray, Sir, do you believe in ghosts? or do you suppose that I am dreaming?

JUSTICE.

Well, well, a little time will clear up the cause, and his being caught in the fact, prevent his attempting to prove an alibi.

FAG *advances, and steps between them.*

Pray, who the devil may you two be? And what do you want in my house?

MARTHA. [*In amazement.*

I protest, this is Fag! Why, sure, the world is turned topsy-turvy—Lord, how he is drest! Pray, Fag, is it not true, that there is here a young man, who came about a week ago?

FAG.

Oh yes—it is very true.

MAR.

MARTHA.

Now, Mr. Justice Chuclepate, you see I was right.

JUSTICE.

Why, there are more young men in the world than my nephew, though few such fine looking fellows, I grant you!

MARTHA, [*To Fag.*

Is he not a fine, bold, stout looking man, with brown hair, a roguish, piercing black eye, and a noble appearance?

FAG.

Yes, a very noble appearance!

MARTHA.

A mild, sweet, melting expression withal!

FAG.

Oh yes—mild as mutton—I never twice had to call for a plate, or a drink, at dinner.

MARTHA.

He is in the service, is he not?

FAG.

Yes, oh yes, and a very clever servant he is. In the twinkling of an eye he can dress up a desert; and then he is a dead hand, at pickling, and preserving.

MARTHA.

He should have an uniform turned up with green.

FAG.

Yes, but the present livery is green, with broad gold lace.

THE WHIM,

MARTHA.

What nonsense are you talking ?

FAG.

Nonsense ! why, it may be so, for I am answering all your questions !

MARTHA.

He is called Belgrave.

FAG.

No, no, he is called Cæsar, and an active lad he is ; it is a pity such a one should be out of employ.—I think you can't do better than take him to yourself—he will do your business, I dare say, well.

JUSTICE.

I told you, that you were mistaken.

MARTHA. [*Enraged.*]

Every creature around me seems to be mad ! Would to God I was so too ! for I have not patience for such folly. Fool, puppy, story-teller, shew me to your master ?

FAG.

My master ! why, I have none—but, harkee, my dear, if it is your brother, Lord Crotchett, that you want, he is in the kitchen, I suppose, cooking my supper. As for me, I must hurry to the saloon, to take a peep at my masked ball, where I hope to have the honor of seeing you, as I perceive neither of you are in character.—Faith, I shall not know very well how to regulate this ball. I wish I had a polite, smooth spoken gentleman to be Master of the Ceremonies, for etiquette is all and all in the fashionable

able world. If you follow its rules, you may, under the
rose, do what you please with impunity. [*Exit Fag.*]

MARTHA.

We were to blame to talk to this fellow, who certainly
is drunk. Let us go to the ball, and we shall there find
your nephew: he won't escape my eyes, whatever garb he
may have chose.

JUSTICE.

No, no—I cannot go to expose myself at a masquerade,
in my robes; it would be ridiculous.

NELL. [*Takes up the domino.*]

Lord, here is, *apropos*, a domino—pray, put it on—
no one will know you.

JUSTICE.

Indeed, you make me do a very foolish thing!—And
what shall I do with my robes and wig?

MARTHA.

Come, let me dress you?

JUSTICE.

But I hear people coming!

MARTHA.

Follow me to a private room, and I will dress you,
Exeunt.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

BELGRAVE.

THERE is nobody here—I may unmask.—Would to heaven Julia would come!—What a cursed rencontre it was with Martha!—I was just blest with a dawn of hope, when my evil genius, jealous of my happiness, sent this spiteful, envious woman!

[*Fag enters with a bottle and glass; Belgrave conceals himself.*]

FAG.

Thank heaven! here is a quiet spot, where I may take a glass comfortably.—[*Fills his glass.*]—I have no companion—Come, to amuse myself, I think I'll try to sing the song on Lord Howe's Victory.

FIRST OF JUNE, 1794.

*Britannia sat high pois'd in air,
Almighty prowess girt the fair,
Firm wisdom crown'd her brow;
She sat indignant 'midst a storm,
Surrounding powers saw with alarm,
And smiling look'd on HOWE.*

*She cried—Behold how from afar
Treasons and murder, sound to war,
Portending dreadful row;
Yet Britons, though the tempest's near,
Undaunted, banish every fear,
Then turn'd—and shew'd them HOWE.*

*Fell Anarchy overwhelm Gallia's slaves,
To lawless despots, leave the knaves,
Servile—like herds, to bow,
Unaw'd by heav'n—disclaim'd by men,
Honor and law they ne'er again
Shall know—save by my HOWE.*

They

See, with usurping venom fill'd,
 Their frantic swords in rage they wield,
 And perfidies avow;
 Daring—they tempt my sons to scorn
 Those virtues all from Gallia torn,
 Which center all in HOWE.

Traitors to God, their King, and Laws,
 More fierce than wolves, without a cause,
 They every crime avow;
 They seek to spoil and overwhelm each state,
 By blood and crimes, to aggravate
 God's vengeance, aim'd by HOWE.

Unthinking men! soon shall ye know
 Th' Almighty's creatures here below,
 To his wise laws must bow;
 Else fell perdition soon shall fall,
 Omnipotence shall guide each ball,
 Hurl'd by his servant—HOWE.

Kings, 'midst the storm, shall cautious wield,
 The sceptre, screen'd by Wisdom's shield,
 And Justice crown each brow;
 All taught to fear beyond the grave,
 Th' ambitious, with the treacherous slave,
 Trembling, shall look to HOWE.

Convuls'd all nations now appear,
 Austria bleeds—Helvetia fears,
 Belgium their force allow;
 Prussia, by artful av'rice toss'd,
 Russia, in wild amaze is lost—
 All anxious look on HOWE.

Tranquil, I long beheld those woes
 On Royalty hurl'd, by its foes,
 Estrang'd to nature now;
 Mourning to see, great Austria's fall,
 Those ills, which did the Dutch appal,
 I heedless turn'd from HOWE.

But haste!—recall my scatter'd bands,
 Vengeance I'll place within his hands!
 Haste, then—fit out each prow;
 Britannia then, shall strike a blow,

Shal

*Shall hurl destruction on the foe,
By gallant, glorious HOWE!*

*Their murdering swords all soon shall bleed,
On those, who now these miscreants lead,
Treasons and death to sow;
Who force them to renounce their God,
Bend to the guillotine, and rod,
Unaw'd—till they meet HOWE.*

*Let him go—myriads bring to me,
I'll shew them Britons, rich and free,
Who laws from heaven, avow;
Then send them back to Gallia's shore,
Honor to teach—to sin no more,
To love their God, and HOWE.*

*Teach them to know, all Britain's sons
With Loyalty, most nobly burns,
Their God, and King avow;
Albion, with power and commerce far,
The world shall traverse, 'spite of war,
Protected safe by HOWE.*

*Encamp'd by nature, arm'd by God,
Britannia holds th' avenging rod,
To which the world does bow;
Triumphant o'er the main I'll ride,
My wooden walls, brave foe and tide,
All nations yield to HOWE.*

[*Whilst singing, Belgrave appears; he conceals his bottle.*]

FAG.

What!—these masks have sworn to hunt me down!

BELGRAVE. [*Masked.*]

I protest, it is Fag!

FAG.

Sweet Mr. Somebody, your servant!—will you do me
the very singular favor to leave me alone, for, between you
and

and I, I am engaged in a little bit of secret, very agreeable business—a *bonne fortune*—you understand me, Sir—and I would not for the world expose the dear creature.

BELGRAVE. [*Unmasks.*]

So, so, Fag—very well!—But for goodness sake, tell me where is my Julia?

FAG.

La, honest Cæsar, is it only thee, my boy! I did not know ye—but you're come very patly to share a dev'lish good bottle of wine, which I whipt off the side-board.

BELGRAVE.

Is it so?—This is your sweet creature!—your *bonne fortune*!—ha! ha! ha!

FAG.

Why, Lord, you know that men of fashion always brag the most, where there is the least reality!

BELGRAVE.

Is Miss Julia in the ball-room?

FAG. [*Drinking.*]

Faith, I cannot say, for I passed most of my time in the room where the good eating is.

BELGRAVE.

My dear Fag, I have a secret of the utmost consequence to repose in you.

FAG. [*Drinking.*]

You had better not tell it till to-morrow, when I shall be no longer a great man—I may keep it better—But

K

come,

come, my honest jolly dog—take a glass of wine—you look like the knight of the woeful countenance.

[Offers a glass of wine.]

BELGRAVE.

Excuse me, Fag—I'm in a hurry.

FAG. *[Forcing the glass upon him.]*

Nay, you shall take one glass—Come, I'll give you a toast—"May we servants prove good masters, and our masters faithful *servants* to the public!"

BELGRAVE.

I drink it with all my heart.—Now hear me!

FAG.

By the time I have finished this bottle, I shall be as talkative as a prince.

BELGRAVE.

I expect you will serve me essentially—my situation is pressing—I must begin, by telling you—that I am not what I seem.——

FAG. *[Drinking.]*

So much the worse, my boy—you seem a very good honest fellow.

BELGRAVE.

I am a man of fashion, Fag!

FAG. *[Drinking.]*

Then, 'pon my soul, it is two to one, that you are bad one.

BELGRAVE.

My fortune is very large.

FAG.

FAG.

So far, that's well. If that is the case, you are good enough for the great world.

BELGRAVE.

I have taken this humble situation, to gain the affections of my Julia.

FAG.

There you are wrong again, my lad. Fashionable ladies don't think any thing of a good man—it is a rich—a great man, whom they hunt for.

BELGRAVE.

But Julia is uncontaminated by fashion.

FAG. [*Drinking.*]

But are you serious? Are you not the honest dog I took you for?

BELGRAVE.

Indeed, I am not what you suppose me.

FAG. [*Drinking.*]

Well, since you are such an adept in deceit, I begin to believe that you are some great Prince in disguise—faith, perhaps you are the King of Prussia himself!—If so, I humbly crave pardon of your sacred Majesty, for my want of respect!

BELGRAVE.

No, no, Fag—I am better than a great man, I'm an honest one——But at present, only think of serving me—time is precious.

FAG.

For an honest man, let his fortune be what it may, I will do all I can, and with all my soul too.

K 2

BEL-

THE WHIM,

BELGRAVE.

Well, then, my friend, you must know——

FAG. [*Drinking.*

But, in case you should be a great man,—first, let me take t'other bumper, just to strengthen my faith.

BELGRAVE. [*Impatiently.*

Will you at least watch here, till I go into the ball-room to look for Julia; and if she or Nell come here, stop them until I return.

FAG.

That I will—leave that to me—I have got where-withal to amuse them.

BELGRAVE.

And rely on my utmost gratitude. [*Exit Belgrave.*

FAG, *Solus.*

Adieu—success attend you!——Faith, this is an odd whimsical world!—a great man degrades himself to the most humiliating situations, to gratify himself; and a poor Cook becomes a great man, to please the caprice of a man in power——But, let me have t'other glass.—[*Drinks.*] “Here is success to Miss Julia and her Lover!” He is a d——d fine fellow, be he what he will—[*Yawns.*]—So, so, I begin to get drowsy. Next time I am master, I'll give my fête in the morning—it will save candles, and I shan't grow sleepy——This wine I thought was Champagne—if s, it is not over enlivening. Let's taste it now quietly, for I have been so hurried and flurried, that I was glad to swallow it, without tasting its quality.—[*He drinks, and throws away the glass.*]—Oh, rot it—I have made a devilish mistake—it is only Perry——What
a con-

a confounded blunder!—but I'll go get a bottle of royal Port to qualify it. [Exit Fag.]

SCENE II.

The Masquerade.—The Justice in the Domino sent by Belgrave to Julia, and Martha's cap and bonnet on.—Martha in the Justice's robes and wig. Belgrave advances, leading the Justice.

BELGRAVE.

[The Justice courts him in dumb-show.]

Come, my adorable Julia! you now know who I am—your ever faithful Belgrave!—The moment is precious—perhaps I am on the eve of losing you for ever! There is but one possible method of avoiding the marriage which you dread—A relation of mine will afford you an honorable and safe retreat, till I obtain my uncle's forgiveness—he is all goodness—and thus you will escape the misery which awaits you—Oh, then, my angel, consent to come with me!—You do not reply—Plead for me, Nell? *[To Martha.]* Oh, hear me Julia!

JUSTICE. *[Unmasks.]*

I do listen attentively, my dear nephew.

BELGRAVE.

Ye Gods, my uncle!—Miss Martha, too! Oh then, I know the source of my misery!

MARTHA. *[To the Justice.]*

Well, Justice Chuclepate, was I mistaken? Was I wrong in making you take evidence incog? You see, Sir, I know how to go to work. Are you still in doubt as to the misconduct of your nephew?

JUS-

THE WHIM,

JUSTICE.

In spite of my anger at the idle dog's follies, I cannot help laughing—ha! ha! ha!—at the droll adventure—So, so, Mr. Belgrave, your wild oats will never be done sowing, I perceive—and so I am all goodness, eh!—ha! ha! ha!

BELGRAVE.

Forgive me, my dear Sir—you know not half the temptation which I have had to this adventure.

Enter Lord CROTCHETT.

Come, let me see what characters are here—Ha, what do I see!—my sister a judge, and the judge an old woman!—Very good, faith—Ha! ha! ha!

NELL.

I thought nobody was to be admitted here in their real characters!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Why, as to my sister, her character appears rather doubtful.

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

NELL.

Well, I think there is no doubt at all. As she appears to have no justice, she is in character as a judge.

JULIA.

Besides, she has unfairly condemned, unheard, this culprit.

NELL.

At least, it was not her fault that she did not give him a fair trial!—Ha! ha! ha!

FAG.

FAG.

And if it is true, that experience teaches some folks, Miss Martha long ago, I dare say, was a good judge——
Ha! ha! ha!

JUSTICE.

The reason why I appear a plaintiff at this bar is—that having lost my nephew, this lady gave information that he had got into an illegal connection in this house; and as I know that he never runs away from a petticoat, I chose a character that would alarm him the least.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Pray, Mr. Justice Chuclepaté, is your nephew coming to the ball?

JUSTICE.

Why, there he stands.

Lord CROTCHETT.

What, Cæsar your nephew?

BELGRAVE.

If your Lordship will deign to hear me——

FAG. [*Stopping him.*]

It is to me, Sir, as master of this house, that you should address yourself, to make your excuse, and to tell your story——Come, out with it.

BELGRAVE.

My love has made me criminal, and must plead my excuse.

Lord CROTCHETT.

So, so, you have made a dupe of me.

MAR-

THE WHIM,

MARTHA.

Oh, the wretch has deceived us all!

NELL. [*Aside.*]

She is the only one mortified by the discovery, old spiteful!

Lord CROTCHETT.

These proceedings are unpardonable.—A fellow comes into my house in disguise, seduces my daughter, and corrupts my servants, and then bows very low, and tells me love made him guilty, and will plead his excuse, Let us see what sort of a lawyer Mr. Cupid will make, for I must seek justice for this trespass.

FAG.

You may have your belly-full of law, before you get a morsel of that, perhaps.

MARTHA.

Such a traiterous, perfidious varlet calls for vengeance from heaven!

Lord CROTCHETT.

If this is permitted, a father's rights are no longer sacred!

MARTHA. [*Weeping.*]

Nor can we, poor, helpless, unprotected virgins, any longer be safe! for, oh! who can we believe—who trust!

FAG.

It is I alone that all this concerns—since it is I alone who command in this house.

Lord CROTCHETT.

But this does not belong to you at all, Sir.

FAG.

FAG.

Sir, as you value the ancients, your promise will be sacred; and it is I who shall pronounce judgment.

Lord CROTCHETT.

No—not in a thing of this nature.

BELGRAVE.

History says, Sir, that there was no reserve of power on the part of the master, on the Feast of Saturnalia.

FAG.

And I should like to see the man, who shall dare to dispute my authority!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Well, Sir, let us hear what you will decide?

FAG.

First, that you shall grant free pardon to Belgrave.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Well, to shew my respect for the ancient ceremony, I obey.

[Takes Belgrave's hand.]

FAG.

And to prove that you have no remains of one vice of the great man—the making a parade of what you do not feel—as a peace offering, you shall give him Miss Julia.

Lord CROTCHETT.

No, no, that I cannot do.

L

NELL

THE WHIM,

NELL.

Oh, I dare say you mean to sacrifice her as an offering to that filthy old Egyptian mummy!

FAG.

Very well, Sir, you cannot, you say; but, 'pon honor, I can, and will, now that I have the power, which I defy you ever to make better use of, than in making happy two honest hearts.

[He goes to join Belgrave and Julia's hands.]

Lord CROTCHETT.

Stop, I command you, Fag!

FAG.

Keep your distance, fellow! As for you, Madam Martha, you ought to shew some equity and mercy, when you wear these robes. I wish sincerely, that this was the only time they have covered opposite qualities!—And as for you, Mistress Justice, you ought to be all compliance and consenting, now that you are in the character of Miss Martha; and now that you are become an old woman, I have no doubt but that you are convinced of the propriety of yielding in time.

JUSTICE.

Upon my word, I am of your opinion; and if my consent can support my nephew's claim, he has it.

MARTHA.

Is it possible! Oh, shame upon you!

FAG. *[To Lord Crotchett.]*

Remember, Sir, that your word is pledged; and as you
are

are now only a Cook, you cannot break it with impunity, as you formerly might, when a man of fashion !

Lord CROTCHETT.

Well, good Sir, I shall not contradict you, I'm determined ; and to prove my respect for the ancients, Greeks and Romans, I confirm your decision ; and therefore bestow my Julia on Belgrave.

JULIA.

Pardon me, my dear father—to my aunt's superior claim I freely resign him.

Lord CROTCHETT.

To Martha!—Ha ! ha ! ha !

BELGRAVE.

Unkind Julia !

MARTHA.

How dare you defame me, you intriguing minx !

NELL.

Nay, Madam, you know you said to him, that you thought all men brutes except him, until he slighted you !

MARTHA.

Insolent wretches ! I hope Julia will completely make the brute a monster !

[*Exit Martha.*]

JUSTICE.

Is it possible, all this !

BELGRAVE.

Think not, dear uncle, that I was capable of treating improperly your friend. Had she the virtues and beauties of
an

an angel, I could only love my Julia! Martha was only interested in me because your nephew.

NELL. [*Aside.*

Consequently younger, and more to her mind.

Lord CROTCHETT.

Come, Julia, smile upon him, and never again be uneasy at the malice of an old maid, either when she attacks your lover, or your reputation. Look upon her as a person, who, from disappointment, is privileged to envy that happiness which she cannot enjoy.

FAG.

Bravo, my Lord! you merit well to be master, since you act so nobly. Be, then, master for ever—only have the goodness to give me a place in your kitchen, where use and habit have placed my ease and comfort—There is no happiness without mental, or bodily labour: without this wonted stimulus to action, I should sink under indolence.—In the gay idle scenes of the great, I should never be at home, and existence would soon become tiresome to me. I therefore wish not to usurp any more authority, except to make my dear little Nell accept of me,

NELL.

I hate all despotic power—the feelings of my heart alone compel me!

Lord CROTCHETT.

Now, you find what a judicious ceremony this was of the ancients. I am sure I shall be a better master for it, all my life, having learned, how painful it is for a British mind,

mind, however humble in fortune, to bend to any yoke, but that of reason.

FAG.

Aye, my Lord. And I am sure, we servants shall profit by the knowledge which we have acquired. I have found how apt one is, when in power, to abuse authority, and, amidst indulgences, to forget the hardships we impose, and to look down with contempt on those who are our inferiors—only in their fortunes.

NELL.

And I, for my part, shall never, in future, repine, whatever my situation—sensible that if one will make the best of it, one may derive advantages even from other people's *Whims*. I wish not, for my part, to see the order of things changed in the least—I only wish, that every body may remember, as well as I do, a maxim which I learned at Mrs. Reform's school—Never to let a flaw be long of mending, lest it get incurable—*for a stitch in time saves nine*.

Lord CROTCHETT.

And I, for my part, never again shall give up, even for a day, the duties of my situation, as one of the three valuable parts of our glorious Constitution, who, I hope, will each, for ages yet to come, discharge, incorruptibly and distinctly, their several duties, without encroaching on each other's *prerogative*.—So that the name of Briton may, to the latest ages, prove an Example to nations, and the Admiration of mankind!

FINIS.

A COMEDY.

And I, for my part, never again shall give up, even for a day, the duties of my station, as one of the three noble pairs of our glorious Constitution, who I trust will each, for ages yet to come, discharge bravely and distinctly their several duties, without encroaching on each other's prerogative—So that the name of Britain may to the latest ages prove an example to nations, and the admiration of mankind!

THE END.

Aye, my Lord. And I am glad we have found the knowledge which we have acquired. I have found how apt one is, when in power, to abuse authority, and, amidst indulgence, to forget the duties we owe. And to look down with contempt on those who are our inferiors in rank and station.

THE END.

And I, for my part, shall never, in future, repeat what ever my station—be it what it will—shall make the duty of it, my chief advantage over from other people. Where I will not, for my part, to be the order of things changed in the least—I only wish, that every body may remember, as well as I do, a maxim which I learned at Mrs. Hallow's school—Never to let a fellow long of anything, lest it get insensible to a want in that point.

THE END.

And I, for my part, never again shall give up, even for a day, the duties of my station, as one of the three noble pairs of our glorious Constitution, who I trust will each, for ages yet to come, discharge bravely and distinctly their several duties, without encroaching on each other's prerogative—So that the name of Britain may to the latest ages prove an example to nations, and the admiration of mankind!

THE END.

